

Can we count on the private sector in addressing family planning needs of young people in Egypt?

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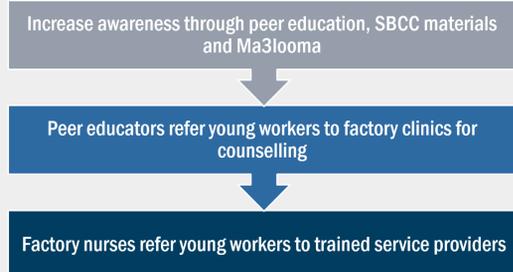
BACKGROUND

The recent increase in Egypt's fertility rate highlights the need for renewed attention to the country's family planning (FP) program. Currently, the Ministry of Health and Population is the largest provider of FP in Egypt. However, it may not be able to meet the needs of the growing cohorts of women entering reproductive age. Expanding the role of the private sector in the provision of voluntary FP services and supplies holds great potential to meet the current and future FP needs of millions of Egyptian women. A situational analysis of the private sector implemented by the Evidence Project/Population Council Egypt, with funding from USAID/Egypt, recommended reaching out to young people to prepare the market before they get married and improving the quality of voluntary FP services delivered in the private sector.

The Evidence Project/Population Council Egypt and its local partners are currently implementing a pilot model that focuses on demand creation for FP information and services among factory workers of both sexes in partner factories through peer education and distribution of social and behavior change communication (SBCC) materials. Additionally, targeted factory workers are introduced to a social media platform "Ma3looma" as a credible source for FP information. The model also focuses on creating a network of private providers who are trained in quality FP services aiming to increase access to voluntary FP services in the private sector.

METHODS

The project partnered with five factories in the investment zone which has a total of 40,000 workers (mostly young people). Selected factory workers of both sexes were trained as peer educators to deliver basic FP messages and distribute SBCC materials (each to around 60 of his/her co-worker). On the supply side, private physicians, pharmacists, and nurses including those in factory clinics were trained on quality FP services pertinent to young people as well as counselling skills, updated FP methods, and volunteerism.



RESULTS

To date, 181 factory workers of both sexes were trained as peer educators and 70% of peer educators in factories scored at least 80% on the post-test implemented in late 2017.

Approximately 11,000 factory workers were reached with FP messages via peer education, distributed SBCC materials, and the Ma3looma website.



Two groups of peer educators that were trained in Abu Sultan Fayed, July 2017



As a result of this project, 55 nurses, 183 pharmacists, and 38 physicians were trained from 133 facilities. Using a monitoring checklist, an increase in items focused on during the training was observed compared to the baseline assessment. Peer educators and factory nurses mainly referred factory workers to NGOs while pharmacists referred clients to private clinics.



A group of physicians being trained on IUD insertion using models, January 2018

Engaging the Private Sector

- Levi Strauss Foundation supported the implementation costs of a management training course on women and factory health for Evidence Project factories in Egypt (in addition to other Levi's-affiliated factories), as part of the company's global Worker Well-Being initiative.
- In celebration of 2018 World Contraception Day, Population Council/Evidence Project partnered with Techno Pharmaceuticals to conduct an orientation session for a group of trained service providers in Port Said to familiarize them with their newest FP products in the market, reinforce FP benefits, and dispel misconceptions about modern methods.
- After hearing about all of the work being done in Port Said, Etisalat Foundation, one of the three largest service providers of telecommunication in Egypt, has awarded Population Council Egypt approximately \$42,000 to furnish an onsite clinic in the investment zone to provide FP services in addition to training additional service providers and peer educators.

FP Animated Videos

Three animated videos were produced and posted on Ma3looma's social media channels:

- Definition and benefits of FP
- Key FP methods
- Myths and correct information about key FP methods



Launching Ma3looma FP Facebook Page

In addition to the Ma3looma website and general Ma3looma page on Facebook, the project launched the "Ma3looma: Family Planning" Facebook page in response to suggestions by several peer educators to allow better and more accurate monitoring of audience FP needs.

CONCLUSION

Main highlights of the pilot include:

- Factories:** The model succeeded in engaging factories which can serve as an entry point for thousands of factory workers.
- Corporate:** Levi Strauss Foundation supported the implementation costs of management training courses for the project's factories in Egypt as part of the company's global Worker Well-Being initiative.
- Pharmaceutical Companies:** They engaged in meetings and action plans to tackle challenges facing private FP providers (e.g., shortage and stock outs of FP methods).
- Pharmacists:** Working with pharmacists who represent the first point of contact for FP clients presents a window of opportunity that could be used to expand the role of the private sector in addressing FP needs of Egyptian couples.
- Factory nurses:** By expanding the role of the factory nurse from providing first aid to also acting as a credible source of FP and reproductive health (RH) information and counselling, the factory clinic becomes a trusted place for those seeking RH information.
- Factory workers:** The pilot model of integrated factory interventions in Port Said can be tailored and scaled up given the large number of private garment factories in Egypt which are mostly staffed by young women with secondary or higher education of whom about 80 percent are unmarried.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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